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5 September 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Statement by Heinz HERRE on BND Succession

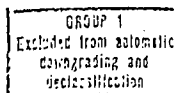
1. Heinz HERRE left for a two-week vacation on the last day of Chancellor Kiesinger's visit, and we had no chance to discuss with him any possible conversations which might have taken place between the Chancellor and General WESSEL concerning an offer to WESSEL to become the new President of the BND. HERRE passed through Washington this past week-end on his way to Canada; and I had lunch with him on Saturday, 2 September 1967. A full contact report is being prepared; but the purpose of this paper is to present his statements on the BND succession, which were made during the luncheon and in two subsequent telephone conversations.

2. HERRE said that the Chancellor had raised the question of the BND succession with WESSEL at a dinner at the German Embassy on 16 August. The Chancellor did not offer the job to WESSEL but indicated a desire to have WESSEL visit him in the near future in Germany where they could discuss the succession problem in great detail in a more quiet and relaxed atmosphere. According to HERRE, WESSEL has advanced his previously scheduled departure date so that he will be in Bonn at the Chancellor's convenience around the 18th or 19th of September. WESSEL actually leaves Washington on 8 September but must first handle some NATO business before arriving in Bonn.

3. HERRE stated that it is now more important than ever that we spread the word in Bonn through Ray Cline, and perhaps through the Ambassador, that the appointment of an outsider to the BND Presidency is simply not acceptable to us. HERRE went ahead to note that since GEHLEN is the dean of all intelligence chiefs and since we are Germany's most important ally, we are surely entitled to make our influence felt in such an important appointment. HERRE said that because he had departed so quickly on leave and because he was in town only for the week-end, he has not communicated with GEHLEN since the Chancellor's visit; but he assumes there has been no change in the situation.

4. In another connection, HERRE mentioned Baron von GUTTENBERG as being perhaps the most influential of the

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Chancellor's advisors; and he said that the Baron, as a staunch friend of the BND, was sure to strongly recommend WESSEL as the successor to GEHLEN.

5. On the same evening, HERRE called me at home and said that he had forgotten to tell me something quite important at lunch. The "important" matter will be covered in the full contact report; but I suspect that the true reason for his call was to inform me that the WESSEL's would be paying a farewell call at his home on the next afternoon, Sunday, 3 September. He promised to call me if anything new came up during this visit, otherwise I could assume that the situation remained unchanged from that which he had sketched out at lunch.

6. HERRE did call late the next afternoon and stated that the WESSEL's had just left after a long and intimate visit. HERRE said that he and WESSEL had discussed the BND Presidency and that WESSEL had indicated that he would like to have the job. HERRE said they had discussed a number of ideas about the way in which WESSEL should handle the job if he received the appointment. HERRE then repeated his remarks of the previous day about our role in securing the appointment for WESSEL and stressed that we should not actually mention any names but should rather attempt to talk the people in Bonn out of appointing anyone from outside the BND. He noted that the greatest danger to an eventual appointment of WESSEL comes from Helmut SCHMIDT; and he recalled a conversation which he had with SCHMIDT at the time of the Atlantik Bruecke meetings in which SCHMIDT had said, in regard to the succession problem, that there were possibilities other than the appointment of WESSEL. HERRE told me that he and WESSEL had discussed this possible opposition and that they were agreed that, should the opposition prove overly strong at this particular moment, there is no reason why GEHLEN cannot be asked to stay on for another year and WESSEL can continue his NATO assignment in Brussels until the situation appears more favorable.

7. HERRE noted that the WESSEL's were having dinner at the Critchfields' later that evening and that WESSEL would have an opportunity to see the DCI prior to his departure for Europe. According to HERRE, WESSEL is to see the German Ambassador sometime this week; and Mr. Helms will also be present. As noted above, WESSEL actually departs on 8 September; and his wife will follow three days later.

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John D.